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should be bewitched or poisoned. Missionaries, who are not infrequently appealed to by Chinese when they fancy themselves bewitched by the Miao, mostly find them to be suffering from malarial. The Miao say that the witch throws things down on the road, sometimes only a straw, and the first person who comes along is bewitched. They may also bewitch a person's food and in this way injure him. Some time ago the whole countryside not far from Anshunfu was troubled by a witch. The Miao from that region came in a body to the district magistrate in Anshunfu city, and petitioned that the witch might be removed from that neighbourhood. The witch was arrested and banished.

775

All the Miao believe in the soul and a future state. The Ya-ch'io Miao say that a man has three souls—one is his shadow, one is his reflection as seen in the water, and the third is his real self. Probably they learned this from the Chinese. As a rule, we think they only know and speak of one soul. They also believe in heaven, but most of them know nothing about a hell. The Hua Miao say there is a place in the earth where demons are, but do not mention it as a place to which the souls of the wicked go. They think that ordinary people, that is most

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775 people, when they die go to heaven, but that very wicked people are born again on earth in a very wretched condition. We doubt if they attach the same idea of superlative bliss to the place where the dead go as is generally associated with heaven, but we must think of it as heaven because they call it so, and speak of it as being above the sky. The ancient Chinese seem to have had no knowledge of a purgatory or hell. In the Classical Books the good kings who died are mentioned as being in heaven with their loyal ministers, but nothing is said of bad kings and bad ministers who died, or of the common people. What the Chinese now say of hell or purgatory they learned from the Buddhists, and if any Miao now talk of hell, they have probably learnt it from the Chinese.

764 Of course, beliefs and practices vary among the different tribes, and their funeral ceremonies and rites concerning the dead are not all just the same. Among the Heh Miao when a man dies they plait a mat of bamboo, six feet by two feet, upon which they lay the corpse. In dressing the dead they do not fasten the clothes in the usual way on the right side, but lay them loose on the left side. Next they invite an exorcist to drive away any evil influences that might injure the living or the dead, and to choose

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766 756 On the day of the funeral procession, some seven, eight, or ten, and sometimes as many as 20 or 30, sorcerer priests are invited. Each holds his particular sorcerer's banner and cymbals and drums, with a large entourage following. Therefore, the funeral procession of a sorcerer in the Miao area is an exciting affair well worth watching. It is said that when the [775] deceased sorcerer priest ascends to heaven, on the way he has to pass through five garrisons and four outposts. Along the way the other sorcerer priests are expected to act as the vanguard, hence the more sorcerer priests present the stronger the force. Each sorcerer priest has to go to the grave before he can withdraw his "soldiers" and lower his banner to return home.

765 As for Miao mourning garments, when a father dies, a [292] white headband is worn, with two streamers trailing behind before the burial has yet taken place. If both parents are dead, then the two streamers reach to the ground, otherwise only one ribbon does. Within a period of four months the mourner should not lift a hoe or a machete for at least one month; he [302] does not shave his head, he does not sing, he wears mourning clothes for three years. In the case of a mother's death, the white cloth headband with which the head is wrapped is not washed for four months, during which period the mourner does [302] not shave his head nor drink cold water, and the mourning clothes are worn for four years. There are persons who wear mourning for their deceased parents all their lives up to 50 or 60 years. Mourning clothes for paternal grandparents are worn for 12 days, and for a maternal uncle or his wife 12 days also. For a deceased son the mother wears a red streamer on her headband for three days.

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776 with the ability or knowledge within the domain of the profane
[771] appears, then they consider it to be the working of kuei /128/
This gives rise to fear or hope, prayers or opposition. There is
* [782] only one method and that is to invoke the assistance of kuei
with supernatural powers and offer sacrifices to them.

Although the Miao do not differentiate between shen and kuei, they do believe that there is a difference between good and bad kuei. The good kuei live in the yin/supernatural/world
772 of heaven [ta] pia. The earth, on which people live, is the
776 yang /mundane/ world. They do not have the theory of hell, but they believe that under the earth there lives a different kind of human beings. These people are as big as the little finger and live in houses plaited of mugwort and grass. A
774 human being has soul [pien] and a body [ko-ʂ'ien]. When
[828] one dreams it is an excursion of the soul while the body is
[753] asleep. When a person is sick and cannot be cured by medicine, then it is said that his soul has been taken away by a kuei. When a person becomes unconscious, his body has been seized by a ku woman. When a man dies, his soul ascends to heaven,
● 775 and he comes to the realization of death only when he hears the
[761] crash of thunder or when a Miao sorcerer comes to search for him. Those who suffer a sudden or violent death, such as from
[776] knife or spear wound, or from difficult childbirth, rolling into a gully, or falling into a pit, after death many become evil kuei. They are unable to go up to heaven; they are either immediately reborn into another state of existence and come back to life, or remain in the world to make trouble for people.
776 If a streak of black vapor is seen at night, they consider it the
821 manifestation of a kuei and people cry out, "[pɛ ts'əɯ]"
[789] (meaning "drive away"), to expel them. The Miao for the most part believe that all natural phenomena have kuei as their controlling power. Hence the wind has a wind kuei [kuen
[824] fo] and trees, tree kuei [kuen ndu]. When there is a
* [782] violent storm with wind, thunder, and rain, they must burn
[237] beeswax in order to honor the kuei. What has been stated above are the native beliefs of the Miao. In recent years,

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(12) Releasing the Soul of the Dead from Suffering

When there is a death in the family, for the deceased they perform Releasing the Soul from Suffering and Begging Pardon, which in Miao is called [ts‘ɑ˧ mi˨], with the meaning "to cause a person to be released." There are two kuei sacrificed to: [li˨ to˧˥ kuei˧ dzɑ˧˥] and [li˨ ɹ‘i˧ kuei˧ dɑ˧]. The time for the performance is in the evening after supper, and the place in the right corner inside the door in the main house. A bamboo stick about 90 cm. long is used. Every 30 cm. one side of the bamboo is cut off to allow it to be bent into a frame, the two ends of which are stuck into the earth. In front of the bamboo frame is put a rectangular wooden board, on which is spread a piece of white cloth. Five empty bowls are put on the cloth, but before the board are set up five bowls each of wine, meat, and cooked rice arranged in three rows. A bowl of wax is placed behind the board, near which is a handleless spade (Illus. 66). The Miao sorcerer sits behind the bamboo frame, holding a piece of bamboo in his right hand and beating the frame as he utters an incantation in time with the beating to the following effect:

> "After the kuei have led away the dead man, the host will return to having peace. The kuei have come with a steelyard to weigh a human being and take him away. Why /Illus. 66 appears here/ /155/ do you not weigh a pig or a dog, a large cow, a chicken or a duck, instead of weighing a human being? The dead person was in the --- generation (either senior or junior generation) with reference to the host. When a man is dead, he cannot be called back. After death he becomes a kuei. Among men he still has good sons and good grandsons. Today, we have selected a lucky day to make inquiries. At the inquiry tonight you must come to the fire pit. Sorcerers are very few in the world, and so I have been called. I have brought with me the soldiers and horses of my patron saint to this house. The bowl of beeswax, the bamboo frame, five bowls

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of wine, the spade, the wooden board, the white cloth, all are ready here. Will the kuei please come to take them! [lio tou kuei dau], [lio ji kuei dau]!" At this point he stops beating the bamboo frame, takes it away, and sets up the bowls of wine, meat, and cooked rice. The sorcerer-priest makes gestures while uttering an incantation at the same time:

"The helpers have set up the wine, meat, rice, and paper money, and invite the kuei to take them. The dead man has been dead for three days, but when his soul heard the sorcerer-priest's call, then he returned. He returned to his own local area, he returned to his own home. In the world you still have good sons and good grandsons to beg pardon for your sins. The former sins of your

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Illus. 66. Releasing the Soul of the Dead from Suffering.

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life are now all cast away. The sins cannot be cast away in the house, or left to your sons and grandsons, or to the village. All your enmities in the world are also cast away! Guard the host in peace and without troubles."

On finishing the foregoing part of the incantation, the helpers immediately burn the paper money, and the sorcerer-priest continues:

"Wine, meat, and rice have all been offered to you to consume, paper money has been burned; and we ask you to take and use them! Everything is over; now please turn around and go back."

After this the sorcerer-priest and the host eat the meat and drink the wine together.

(13) The Kuei of the Five Grains

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Whenever the harvest of the five grains is not abundant, or the six kinds of domestic animals do not increase, the Miao will sacrifice to the kuei of the five grains, in Miao called [lio¹ no¹]. The kuei invoked are called [mp'a¹ no¹ kuen³ mi³] and [ɲi¹ no¹ kuen³ no¹]. The time of the sacrifice is in broad daylight at any time, and the place is in the right corner inside the main house. A table is set up, and on it are spread five bowls each of wine, meat, and cooked rice, arranged in three rows. The wax is also on the table, and the bamboo /156/ tube is placed behind the table. The Miao sorcerer beats the bamboo tube with the right hand and utters an incantation as follows:

"The host's last year's harvest was not abundant; the five grains formed ears, but produced no grain. Further, they were eaten by locusts. The old year has gone by, the new year has arrived. Now that we have come to the first and second month, an auspicious day has been selected to sacrifice to the kuei. I have been asked to come here, so I

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754 An enemy who wishes to injure the descendants of a person who is being buried secretly throws tiny pieces of iron or wood onto the corpse as it lies in the coffin or into the coffin beside the corpse. If these are not removed, the descendants will suffer great injury, so just before the burial a careful search is made and all such things are carefully removed from the coffin.

787 Burials must be on days controlled by snakes or rabbits.

766 Because it is believed that the spirits of children, after death, roll hail in their hands and throw it down, making hailstorms, they tie a red cloth around the hand of a dead child before it is buried so as to prevent the child from doing such things.

787 764 Formerly the Ch'uan Miao did not take note of the *yin yang* 陰陽 and *fêng shui* 風水 when arranging their graves. Now they use these principles, which they have learned from the Chinese. Chinese *fêng shui* geomancers are sometimes called in to determine the place and direction of the grave, for they are considered more efficient than those of the Ch'uan Miao. Formerly the graves were parallel to the mountains but now, like those of the Chinese, they are at right angles.

765 For two or three nights after the burial fire is taken to the grave and on the next three mornings afterward food is taken to the grave for the newly-buried ancestor to eat.

In making the fire, twelve bamboo sticks are stuck into the ground on the road or path and six bunches of grass, called *yin pao* 陰包, are placed between the sticks. The grass is burnt but not the sticks.

On the first morning, three bamboo cups are filled with rice and some meat is wrapped up in a leaf. These are taken to the grave and left there. For the second meal, on the second day, these things are taken half-way to the grave and left on the road uncovered. On the first and second days the dead person is merely invited to eat. On the third day the food is placed on the grave and covered with thorns or twigs of bamboo and the food is left on the grave.

• [775] To understand the Ch'uan Miao memorial customs, it must be borne in mind that the Ch'uan Miao family includes not only the living but the souls of the departed ancestors for at least three generations; also that the person in Hades needs the same things that he does in this world. He must have food, clothing, money and other things, and he will find cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens useful. These must be provided by the living descendants and the dead ancestors reciprocate by protecting the living descendants and helping them to prosper. Offerings or sacrifices are simply food, money, clothing, drink, etc. given to the deceased ancestors to eat, drink, wear, and use, with the expectation that the ancestors will help the

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765 descendants in every way. Animals are killed with the idea that a life must be given but the life of the animal becomes a living creature that can be used in the other world by the ancestor. Such sacrifices are not atonements for sin.

These memorial festivals are taken very seriously by the Ch'uan Miao. They believe that people must not imitate these festivals in play, and certainly not ridicule them. The ancestors will surely take the life of a cow or water-buffalo that is offered in pretence.

Twelve days after the funeral there is a memorial festival called in Chinese *sao ch'ieh* and in Ch'uan Miao a'gi or *a'si*. The ceremonial drum is not used and the bull is not sacrificed. There is no music of the *liu shêng* or beating of drums or singing of songs.

At this time, the spirit is supposed to come back and visit his former home. Ashes are sprinkled outside the front door and the friends and relatives later look in the ashes for footprints. By the footprints it can be learned whether the person is now a grown human being, or a child, or has been transformed into a fowl, a horse, a dog, or some other creature. A cock is killed and offered in a raw state to the spirit. Then it is cooked, other food is added, and the relatives and friends have a feast. This festival is observed for parents, or for brothers or sisters over three years of age.

769 At a later date there is a memorial service called in Chinese *tso chai* 做斋 and in Ch'uan Miao a vang. It must take place not less than one year after the *sao ch'ieh*, and generally takes place two or three years later, but may be delayed ten or more years if this is made necessary by poverty. Friends and relatives march in procession to the grave (some families do not go to the grave but observe the entire ceremony in the home), beating gongs and drums and playing the *liu shêng*. In this way the soul of the dead is enticed back home. Generally a cow or a water-buffalo or rarely a pig is killed and offered to the ancestor, then it is cooked and eaten by relatives and friends. This ceremony is performed for older brothers or sisters and for ancestors for three generations. The ceremonial drum and the *liu shêng* are used in this ceremony.

• 775 After death a woman carries on her back a grass mat and a man carries on his back a wide, round, shallow winnowing basket called a *po chi* 簸箕 made of bamboo and about two and half feet in diameter. These are burdensome to the souls of the dead, since they make it impossible for them to enter the palace in the level country of Ntsô. The ancestors are released from these burdens during the *tso chai* ceremony and then go happily away to God's flat land where they can enter the palace and visit their ancestors.

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There is a legend that in former times a Miao group or tribe cal' d Hmoɔ Kw'a were accustomed to kill their parents when they had become old and eat them and that their parents were glad to have them do so. It is said that the Ch'ing Miao 青苗 still call themselves Hmoɔ Kw'a and are probably the descendants of that ancient group. It is asserted that during the *tso chai* ceremony the descendants take bread or rice cakes and with their hands mould the cakes into human form, then place them in a bamboo bowl. The *liu shêng* is played, a cow, pig, sheep or chicken is killed as an offering, and after the offering is made the image is cut up and eaten. This is thought to be a continuance of the old custom of eating the parent. It is done very secretly for a Chinese or some other person might ask for an explanation and it would be difficult to give an acceptable reply.

Later, after an indefinite period there is a ceremony called in Chinese *ch'ao chien* 超薦, and in Chuan Miao tsa moɔ. The custom is to dig up the corpse, throw away or burn up the old coffin, carefully wash the bones, place a new coffin in the old or in a new grave and new garments in the coffin, arrange the bones in their natural order on top of the clothing, carefully fold the edges of the clothing over the bones, put the lid on the coffin, and cover the coffin with dirt. This is still performed by many Ch'uan Miao. It is noteworthy that the same custom, which is rapidly disappearing, is found among the Chinese in Fukien Province.

It is thought that because the dead person cannot turn over, he or she becomes very tired and uncomfortable. After from three to ten years the corpse is dug up. The bones are washed with "fire wine" 火酒, then they are rubbed with mustard oil. If the bones are black, the burial place is not good and the corpse must be reburied in a new place else the descendants will not prosper. If the bones are yellow or white, the place is lucky and the reburial should be in the same spot, and the descendants will prosper. During this ceremony the demon drum is used, the *liu shêng* is played to the accompaniment of dancing and appropriate songs are sung. A cow or a pig is sacrificed and there are offerings to the ancestors and a feast. Sometimes the person presiding, called mo, places in a bamboo basket a chopstick for each deceased ancestor and during the ceremony hangs the basket on a beam of the house. The results of this ceremony are that the deceased ancestor who is reburied is comfortable and the descendants have less illness and prosper.

I have been told by a Miao living at Chou Chia Kou 周家溝 that in that locality they no longer dig up the coffin, wash the bones and provide a new coffin and clothing but that instead they make a tiny wooden coffin and garments only a few inches long and burn these with paper or spirit money in the

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823 I can hardly affirm that the Ch'uan Miao believe that the world is flat. The untutored Miao does not know that the world is round, but he sees and climbs and farms so many hills and cliffs and mountains that he regards the world as only comparatively flat. The world has an end somewhere, but he has no conception of its size.

772 Above the sky, or rather on it, is a level land where the souls remain after death with the souls of their ancestors. This paradise is Ntsə ni lʌu GʌU bi or the level land of Ntsə. There are no hills to climb and there is neither sickness nor death. The sun shines every day. Although there are no rainstorms there is no lack of moisture. Those who live there do not farm but find in the forests such things to eat as berries and fruit, as people are supposed to have done on earth in very ancient times. They are given food, clothing and money by their descendants through the memorial and calendar festivals. It is a good place to live in but not as good as this world. There is a ladder to the sky, but ordinarily mortals cannot go up. Some have swooned away and returned and related to their friends what they saw in the level land of Ntsə.

Under this earth there is another world inhabited by dwarfs. These are called in Chinese *sao pa jên* 掃把人 or broom people, because they are as tall as small Chinese brooms or about two feet high. They farm and have their own king, soldiers and government. They live very much as people on this earth, but they have much smaller houses, farms, etc. One Miao fell into dwarfland through a hole in the floor of the emperor's palace, and later came back to the earth through a crack in the ground caused by a drought. When rain finally came, the ground swelled and closed up the crack.

In a special region dragons live or at least the king of dragons lives there. Other stories are told of fishermen who hooked the king of dragons or other dragons with fishhooks in rivers and creeks. To reach the palace of the dragon king it is always necessary to go down through pools of water. When the palace is reached, everything is normal and dry.

There is a specia' region where demons live where it is always dark. People rarely go there although certain legends describe it.

177 775 The Chinese idea of three principal souls or *hun* 魂 and seven lesser souls or *p'o* 魄 is accepted by these people. The *hun* are called in Ch'uan Miao pl'ei and the *p'o* are called *mpl'o*. Of the three principal souls, one remains in the tomb, one goes to Ntsə's level country. One stays among the beams under the roof of the house. On the other hand, one is supposed to be reincarnated. The ideas of reincarnation and of the three *hun* and seven *p'o* were learned evidently from the Chinese; my impression is that they have not been well assimilated.

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774 The soul, if we may speak of it in the singular, is about the size of a person. It is not flesh, but shadowy. It is generally invisible but not invariably so. Some say that if a person is good his soul is larger and that if he is evil his soul is smaller. The soul does not sleep when a person sleeps. It may wander away and if it does not return the person dies. All birds, animals, and many inanimate things have souls. These include trees, rocks, rivers, and mountains.

The shadow is a vital part of a human being. If a mad dog bites a man's shadow, it will kill him. It is worse for a man's shadow to be bitten or cut with a knife than for his body to be bitten or cut. Many of the Ch'uan Miao identify one's shadow with his soul. Therefore at night they place the lamps on low tables or stools so that the souls or shadows will be large and frighten away the demons. Some think the souls are small after death so that they must climb up into bowls in order to eat or drink.

The Ch'uan Miao sometimes find it difficult to say that rocks, trees, mountains, and such things have souls, and find it more natural to say that they have lives, are intelligent, have eyes, and can see. But some assert that the life and the soul are the same. In offering the sacrificial animal, a life must be given and the life becomes a living animal in the world of spirits. It seems to me that the life idea was probably held by the Ch'uan Miao before the Chinese idea of three major and seven lesser souls was absorbed.

775 The doctrine of transmigration, and its attendant theory of cause and effect as influencing rebirth into this world, seem to be assumed and believed. But I have been unable to find much evidence that they have any considerable influence on the thinking and living of these people. Ch'uan Miao friends have told me that cause and effect, or *yin kuo* 因果, are among the things that they regard as living and that it is generally assumed that the dead person will be reborn into this world as a human being.

776 Demons are the souls of people, of birds and animals, of mountains, and of other kinds of inanimate things. If a person has no descendants to care for him, or if his descendants are unfilial and do not pay proper respect to him and do not offer him the necessary food, clothing, money, etc., then he may become a demon. Demons inhabiting rivers and creeks are the souls of people who have been drowned and who try to drown others. The demons of people who have hanged themselves try to cause others to do likewise. Some demons living in caves harm people; these develop from the vapor within the caves. (Probably this idea was caused by the presence of poisonous gases in caves).

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engagement is made. There is generally no love between the bride and the groom unless it is after marriage. Love affairs, which are many, are often between a man and another man's wife or between a woman and another woman's husband. Sometimes lovers run away together, after which go-betweens endeavor to obtain the consent of the bride's parents, and the gift to her parents must be made as usual. Marriage by capture is not unknown. Strange to say, women rather like this method, for it shows that the man loves or esteems the woman, and it often results in a happy marriage.

There are no physicians, although some persons are reputed to know more about medicines and healing than others, and the efficacy of the medicines has not yet been scientifically investigated. The common belief is that all diseases and other calamities are caused by demons, which must be exorcised by the *do nun* or *tuon kung*, who is a magician or shaman. He has a formula for every disease, and besides using ceremonies and incantations to exorcise the demons that cause diseases or other calamities, he performs many real wonders, among which are treading with bare feet on a red-hot plowshare and touching his tongue to the same, spitting or spurting hot oil out of his mouth onto a fire to cause a larger blaze, and with bare feet walking over a ladder of sharp swords. It is not strange that the death rate among the Ch'uan Miao is very high.

The Ch'uan Miao theory of filial piety and of the relation of mutual helpfulness between the deceased ancestors and their descendants corresponds fairly closely to that of the Chinese. The deceased ancestors are believed to be in need of the same things that they need on this earth before death, such as food, clothing, houses, and money, and these are provided by the loyal descendants through the ceremonial offerings. In return the ancestors help and protect their descendants so that they may prosper.

Soon after death the *mo* or priest three times calls on the soul of the dead to return or arise, and when it does not do so he performs a ceremony to open the way of the soul of the deceased to Hades, or to paradise, which is called the ancient level land of Ntzi, the supreme but not the only god. The priest kills a rooster, and the soul of the rooster leads the soul of the dead person to paradise.

Some time after the *mo* has opened the way for the soul of the deceased to go to paradise, there is a procession. In front is a man whirling a stick. He is followed by two men playing the *liu sheng* and dancing, then two blowing water-buffalo horns, two carrying green bamboo twigs, and finally two men with guns. Inside the house a ceremonial drum is beaten. This ceremony is symbolic of the fact that in ancient times their ancestors lived in the forest where there were dangerous wild animals.

During the funeral ceremonies a bull or a male water buffalo is killed and partly cooked, and some or all of it is offered to the ancestors. Then the meat is thoroughly cooked and there is a feast. Friends and relatives enjoy the feast, but the descendants of the deceased do not then eat any of the meat.

Generally on the next night after the bull is killed a dance is performed by the strongest young men inside the house. It takes place in front of the ceremonial

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765 drum and the coffin to the accompaniment of the drum and the *liu sheng*. They exert so much strength that often some of the dancers are pushed over, furniture is smashed, and the walls of the room or house are broken. One story says that in this dance the house was pushed down and everything inside was smashed.

When the coffin is about to be carried out of the house for burial, the priest stands across the doorsill and shoots three arrows inside and three outside the house. This is to drive away demons that might cause any sort of a disaster.

765 Twelve days after the funeral there is performed a ceremony called in Chinese
775 *tso ch'ieh* and in Ch'uan Miao *a si* or *a shi*. The ceremonial drum is not beaten, the bull is not killed, and there is no music of the *liu sheng*. At this time the spirit of the deceased person is believed to return to his old home. Ashes are sprinkled outside the front door, and the friends and relatives later look in the ashes for footprints. It is believed that the footprints will reveal whether the ancestor is now a person, an animal, a reptile, or a fowl.

Not less than one year later there is held a memorial ceremony called in Chinese *tso chai* and in Ch'uan Miao *a vang*. Friends and relatives observe the ceremony in the house or march to the grave beating the ceremonial drum and gongs and playing the *liu sheng* to entice the soul of the dead back home. A cow, a water buffalo, or a pig is killed and offered to the deceased ancestors; it is then cooked and eaten by the relatives and friends. This ceremony is performed for older brothers and sisters and for ancestors for three generations.

It is believed that after death a woman carries a grass mat on her back, and a man carries on his back a wide, round, shallow winnowing basket such as is commonly used in West China. These prevent the souls from entering the palace of the level land of Ntzī. In the *tso chai* or *a vang* ceremony the ancestors are released from these burdens and go happily to God's flat land where they are able to enter the palace and visit their ancestors.

Later, generally after several years, there is a memorial ceremony called in Chinese *ch'ao chien* and in Ch'uan Miao *tsa mong*. The grave is opened, the coffin is burned or thrown away, and the bones are washed with wine and then rubbed with oil. A new coffin and new clothing are provided, and the corpse is reburied in the same or another grave. During this ceremony the drum and the *liu sheng* are used, a cow, water buffalo, or pig is killed, and there is a feast. It is believed that the deceased person becomes very uncomfortable lying in the same position for a long time; also, if the ceremony is not performed, the descendants will not prosper. After the ceremony the ancestor is comfortable and happy, and the descendants will prosper.

765 There is another memorial ceremony called in Chinese *hua t'an*, or flowery altar, and in Ch'uan Miao *a gi bang* or *a gei bang*. It is performed in one of the homes and is participated in by all the relatives having the same name. It takes place about once in three years. A bull is killed, and his hide may be used to cover a ceremonial drum. The meat of the bull and rice, corn, wine, and vegetables are offered to the ancestors, after which there is a feast. The drum is beaten, the *liu sheng* and the flute are played, and there is dancing and singing. Twelve men

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impersonate cows and pretend to fight and to cause the death of six. Women rub soot onto the men's faces until they are black. A woman carries a dummy child which is beaten to pieces. There is much fun and laughter. 765

There is also a ceremony performed about once in three years making offerings to the souls of deceased domestic animals.

In addition, there is the ceremony of eating new grain, and there are at least 11 calendar festivals which in date, method of conducting the ceremonies, and purpose correspond very closely to those of the Chinese.

RELIGION

One can easily get the impression that the Ch'uan Miao have no religion, and they themselves sometimes confirm this impression. They have no religious organizations, no organized priesthood, no temples, and no visible gods. It is my opinion, however, that they are a very religious people. Through their daily toil, by the help of their ancestors and the gods, and by means of religious ceremonies, they hope to achieve a long and satisfying life in which the basic needs of food, sex, protection, security, and play and recreation are insured, and after death to join their departed ancestors in the ancient level land of Ntzī. Two of the fundamental elements in their religion are belief in demons, which cause diseases and other calamities and which must be exorcised by the magician and his ceremonies, and the commemoration of their ancestors by ceremonial rites and offerings. 769 776

The untutored Ch'uan Miao does not know that the world is round, and he has seen so many mountains that he does not regard it as entirely flat. There is an end somewhere, but he does not know how big the world is. 823

Above or on the sky is a level land where the souls of the deceased remain with their ancestors after death. It is called the ancient level land of Ntzī (ntzə^{3} Ti·^{3} lau^{3} gau^{1} bi^{2}). Here there are no hills to climb and neither sickness nor death. The sun shines every day, and although there are no rains there is no lack of moisture. People do not farm but gather fruit and berries in the forests, which are much as the forests were on the earth in very ancient times. At the memorial and calendar festivals the offerings of their descendants provide them with food, clothing, money, and wine to satisfy their needs. Formerly there was a ladder connecting the earth and the sky or paradise, but in recent times this connection has been broken. 772 [796]

Under the earth is another world, the land of dwarfs or Lilliputians who are about 2 feet tall. They live much like people on the earth, having houses, farms, a king, soldiers, and a government. One Miao entered this world through a natural cave in a mountain and remained so long that many of the people on earth had forgotten him. Another fell through a hole in the floor of the emperor's palace and after two or three years was able to crawl back onto the earth through a crack caused by a drought. When rain came again the earth swelled up and closed the crack.

Some of the stories speak of a dark place inhabited by demons and presided over by a demon king. 775

The Chinese idea of three principal souls and seven lesser souls, and of karma 776

10: Graham E-5 (1921-?) 1954 AE5 Miao AE5

775 and transmigration, is known and accepted by the Ch'uan Miao but does not
776 seem to be absorbed and does not greatly affect the lives of the people. The soul is real but shadowy, and the soul of a good man is larger than that of a bad man.

Demons are the souls of human beings or of birds, animals, reptiles, or inanimate things. If a deceased person has no descendants or if his descendants are unfilial and do not meet his needs by making the customary offerings, he becomes a demon and harms people. Demons of human beings are called *glang*, and demons of other living creatures are called *ts'ao*. When a person goes crazy and speaks in a meaningless or silly way, it is thought that he is possessed by a demon who is speaking through him. His speech is then called *glang lo* or demon talk.

The idols in the Chinese temples are regarded as demons and are called *glang miao*. There is one devil called *glang da lo* who is so big that he can step from one mountaintop to another and from the earth to the sky. He can kill a person with one blow of his thumb, and if he strikes a person on the chest with the palm of his hand the person dies, and the marks of his palm can be seen on the dead person's chest. There is another sky demon or devil called *ndo glang* who is worshiped by an elaborate ceremony in which a sow is killed.

The gods of the Ch'uan Miao are invisible unless they choose to reveal themselves to human beings. Chief among these is Ntzī, who lives in the sky and controls heaven and earth. He is regarded as good, just, kindly, and very powerful. He is the supreme but not the only god. Some stories tell of his sending his daughter to help poor and unfortunate men, and she generally marries them. A name that is sometimes used is Ntzī (or Ndgū) Nyong Leo, which means god, foundation, old. It apparently designates the same deity.

Another very interesting deity is called Ye Seo, Yei Seo, or Je Seo. He never dies, is very wise, kindly, merciful, and just, induces people to do good deeds, and helps people, especially the poor, who are in trouble. He is often seen in the clouds and can easily make himself visible or invisible. In the province of Canton the name Jesus is often pronounced Ye Seo, but it is uncertain whether the name and character of this deity have any relation to Jesus Christ.

There is a female deity who lives in the sky called Ts'ī Ma Niang Tsai. She is very merciful and especially shows kindness to unfortunate children.

821 There is a warty toad called in Chinese *lai ke pao*, which is believed to have
776 marvelous powers and to cause hailstorms. During these storms men shoot off guns to frighten the toad and cause it to cease sending down hail.

There is a dragon king who causes rain and who lives in a palace beneath a pool or lake. There are stories that tell of his daughter's marrying a very poor man in order to help him.

776 Certain kinds of trees are sometimes worshiped as deities. They are generally trees on hills or mountains that are old and do not shed their leaves in winter—evergreens such as the *nan muh*, but never a fir or pine tree.

778 A strange custom is the worship of the door. The thick doorsill together with the door itself, which often has two wings, is regarded as a deity and is worshiped in an elaborate ceremony in which a pig is killed and offered.

[24 cont.]

764 All night they beat drums and play liu-sheng (6-reed wind instrument). The following day is the day of mourning when friends and relatives bring along different kinds of gifts as expressions of condolence. Some would bring a basketful of glutinous rice; some, a jug of wine; others, firecrackers, candles, incense and paper money. The host would slaughter a buffalo or a horse to feed the mourners. At the same time he has to kill a male dog so that in the nether world the dog can watch the buffalo or the [775] horse. The four legs of the animal are divided among the married children of the family and close relatives, distant relations being given only other parts of the meat. When there are not many relatives, each can bring home a piece of meat weighing about three or four catties. On the third day the corpse is lowered into the coffin after being clothed in four, six or eight black garments as well as shoes and socks. The number of sheets on which the corpse lies depends upon the number of children of the deceased. In case the deceased is childless, he is wrapped only in one sheet. There are three kinds of coffins: the rich use two coffins, the inner and the outer. Ordinary families use the outer coffin; the poor use the inner coffin, also known as the "fire box." The inner and the outer coffins are finished with black paint, but the "fire box" is made of plain wood. All coffins have their fixed dimensions. The inner coffin is one inch thick, five feet two inches long [sic], one foot and two inches wide at the feet and one foot three inches wide at the head. The outer coffin is one foot eight inches thick at the head, nine inches thick at the feet for the upper board, and eight inches thick for the bottom board, the total length being five feet eight inches, the width at the feet being one foot five inches, and the width at the head, two feet. The Miao have the strongest ob-
[823] jection to the presence of iron or [25] copper in the coffin. At the time of burial the family members have to make a last minute inspection for fear some one might slip into the coffin some metal pieces. They believe that "to bury the dead with iron and copper will cause annihilation to the whole family."

As soon as a corpse is laid in a coffin, the burial takes place. This is called "fu-shan" [supporting the mountain]. The larger

[164 cont.]

768 inherited estate, upon which other children may likewise live, according to the particular arrangements agreed upon.

423 Among the settled "Méo" tribes (near irrigated rice fields or particularly fertile areas) the idea of property is clearly established. The ground belongs to the one who has cleared it or laid it out, and it is transmitted by inheritance.

Everywhere else customs are found analogous to those of the "Man," the ground belonging temporarily to the one who cultivates it, but it is abandoned when it is exhausted or when a better piece of ground is found near which one goes and settles.

844 The "Méo" woman gives birth sitting on a tabouret, supported by her mother and by other old women. She afterward lies down on a cot bed. The placenta is buried in front of the door, if a boy is 553 born; it is buried [165] under the hearth if it is a girl (1). Thirty-
852

[775]

1. The "Méo" must know where his placenta is so that he may retrieve it when he is reincarnated.

three days after his birth the child receives his name. Relatives and friends bring presents to him and this is the occasion for a feast [527] as sumptuous as the resources of the family permit. Gifts and feasts are renewed upon all the birthdays. In principle, the children are 853 nursed for three years.

847 Abortion is practiced among the "Méo" for all irregular pregnancies (unmarried women and widows). In case of failure, the baby simply is abandoned from the moment of his birth and dies of hunger.

846 Among certain "Méo" tribes of China the "couvade" still is practiced (the husband goes to bed during the accouchement and receives treatment). This custom is not practiced by the "Méo" of Tonkin, but one observes among them customs that appear to be derived from it. The husband must follow a vegetable diet, he is forbidden to be away from home and to cross over the passes leading toward the neighboring valleys.

582 The "Méo" may contract marriage, either within their own clan, or within any other tribe of the group. They marry very seldom outside their group.

[168 cont.]

776 tormenting human beings, they have no fear at all of these bad spirits, contrary to what we have seen in the "Thai" and especially in the "Man." Also the "Thai" and the "Man" consider the "Méo" as men of a special species.

[169] The "Méo" think that men have three souls, "pli," 774 775 that reincarnate themselves in the bodies of pregnant women. (See note on page 178.)

They have the priest-sorcerers who preside at the ceremonies 793 and have the power of communicating with the spirits. These priests are illiterate and receive no initiation. The tribal traditions, the curtailed rites, and the few formulas of exorcism or of incantation are orally transmitted. The office is usually hereditary.

The "Méo" celebrate a great many festivals, which are so 796 many occasions for having a spree. At the beginning of the year, the spirits of heaven, of the earth, and of the hearth are especially feted, as well as the ancestors. At planting time, sacrifices are made to the spirit of the mountains, protector of the crops. After the harvest, further sacrifices to the spirit of the mountains and to the ancestors. The third day of the fifth month, a special celebration at the time of the harvesting of medicinal herbs. Besides these ceremonies on fixed dates, the "Méo" carefully celebrate the anniversaries [527] of births and of other happy events. All these festivals consist of feasting and drinking intermingled with songs and dances. The "Méo" [157] nature is carefree and very gay; he loves music and dancing. The [831] songs, in "Méo" dialect, are always obscene and even erotic. The [533] dance, performed only by the men, is most often done while playing [535] the "sen." The player keeps his knees bent and the upper part of his body leaning forward. He jumps from one foot to the other, either while turning about or going forward or backward, but without ceasing his playing. (Photo 155, Plate 40.)

The "Méo" children very often play the game of the revolving 524 seesaw, which they probably got from the Chinese. A solid post, deeply planted in the earth, terminates at its upper end in a central peg, on which is balanced a very big pole, which has for this purpose a hole through its center. This pole is movable horizontally about the axis formed by the central peg described above. It is also movable

39: Bernatzik--43 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
AKha A04
Miao AE5

/30/

Chapter 5

Social Organization

a) Organization of the Family

A M 596 618 [611] Among the Meau as well as among the Akha, the family is organized strictly by father right. No esteem even similar to the consideration enjoyed by the parents is shown toward any other relative. In accordance with the organization by father right, descent is reckoned in the male line, and married women belong absolutely to the family of their husband, if he is already independent, or otherwise to the family of the father-in-law.

A M [614] M [775] The extent to which wives are absorbed in the new family group is shown by the fact that the married woman among the Meau not only loses every connection with the sib /Sippe/ from which she is descended, which is also the custom among the Akha, but also, after her death, her soul arises anew in the next child of her husband's family (cf. the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul").

M 596 618 [591] Adult unmarried sons always remain with their father; even married sons do not at first establish an independent family, but are regarded among the Meau as belonging, along with their wives and children, to the family of the father until they have completed their thirtieth year. Accordingly, they live in the paternal home up to this time, even though in a separate area, with their wives and children, and do not manage an independent household. Not until they have reached the aforementioned age do they have a right to build themselves a house and to establish an independent family.

M 593 618 /31/ According to Dhuraratsadorn (1), the Meau never

1. Page 167.

part from their sons, even if the latter are married. As my remarks show, this statement can be regarded as correct only

/52 cont./

851 are eaten immediately, and their blood is sprinkled on a piece of paper which is then pasted on the wall opposite the entrance [776] door. Chicken feathers are pasted around this paper in honor of the tutelary divinity Xa Xing."

I myself made the following observations:

[782] [775] A pair of chickens, a cock and a hen, is sacrificed to the pair of spirits who introduced the soul of a deceased ancestor into the newborn child (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul"). These [231] two animals are killed by having their throats cut, are plucked whole, eviscerated, and cooked. Some of the chicken blood is allowed to drip on the paper of the spirits and is burned while the spirits are invoked. At the main entrance of the house in which the birth took place, a small basket is set in the frame of the opened door, the pair of cooked chickens is placed upon it, and two incense candles are attached. Now the shaman appears and throws his ordeal /oracle/ horns (see the chapter, [787] "Religion and Magic," section on "Magic, Soothsaying, and Interpretation of Omens"), in order to find out whether the omens may be regarded as favorable. Next he begins to evoke [782] the souls of the deceased ancestors. For this purpose he lights the incense candles and puts the sacrificial chickens on their breasts, that is, with their backs upward, and their outstretched legs pointing toward the open door. Then he stands erect in front of the door of the house, with his back turned toward the interior, and murmurs conjurations.

While they are going on, for the better part of an hour, [521] those present, relatives and friends in addition to the parents and children, converse with one another loudly and undisturbed. [854] The mother with the newborn child, which was washed for the first and probably the only time until it is able to walk, /53/ sits somewhat apart in the room and holds the baby on her lap. Her husband does the housework, sets the room in order, looks after the food which is cooking on the hearth, and, in short, goes about his business. A second child, about three years old, [853] is shouting at the top of its lungs and is jealously trying to get his little brother away from the mother's breast so that he himself can drink. He is prevented from doing so, however, by the mother.

Akha AO4
Miao AE5

/115 cont./

A 586 837 the expenses of a feast in which the whole village participates.

h) Old Age and Death

A M 688 [592] Among both the Akha and the Meau the families regard it as their highest duty to provide well for the aged and to treat them very well. Thus old people have a pleasant old age within the community of the large /extended/ family to which they belong and which provides for them. Even old people who no longer have their own sib to care for them do not have to worry because, as was described, they are received into another sib (see the chapter "Social Organization," the section on "Age Classes, Secret Societies, Rank Organization").

A M 763 203 [202] Among both tribes a person's death is quickly made known by means of gong beats and messengers. Hardly a few minutes pass, and the village community is informed. The members of the family, friends, and relatives who live in other villages are also summoned by messengers.

A M 764 In the meantime the corpse is washed, wrapped in new clothes, and, among the Meau, laid out without ornaments on a mat in front of the altar (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section on "Cult and Taboo"). Later the corpse is placed in a shallow basket. Two bamboo sticks are stretched crosswise over this basket, the turban of the deceased is wound on them, and the clothes of the dead are placed on top. Food-stuffs, expecially rice cakes, are placed on the rice basket as an offering for the soul (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul").

A M [782] [775]

Marabail (1) reports a strange custom of the Meau of

M 764 775

1. Page 461.

Indochina: "If a person has died, some money is placed in his mouth and all the buttons are cut from the clothing of the deceased, so that the soul may vanish more quickly. /116/ A piece of red cloth is placed upon the lower portion of the face. Then the gong-beating begins in order to ward off the evil

M [789]

/116 cont./

764 [775] [789] spirits, a pig and a couple of chickens are slaughtered, and the soul is invited to feast on them. Then a great dance takes place."

The deathwatch is maintained by the parents, the surviving spouse, and the children. After a few hours, two or three of these closest relatives relieve one another. During the deathwatch relatives and condoling friends, whose numbers depend on the importance of the deceased, speak of the dead [766] person and mourn his passing. If the deceased was a distinguished man, his body lies in state for two days; in the case of a humble man and women and children, only one day.

614 764 [322] During the deathwatch the men of the sib prepare the coffin for the deceased. For this purpose a tree trunk of a proper length for the deceased is hollowed out. No ceremonies and no special handling of the tools are connected with the carving of the coffin. They go about this work in the same way as they do when they make a pig trough. Then the corpse is put, on its back, into the coffin, and the latter is closed with two boards. Toward twelve o'clock the same men begin to dig a grave at a place in the jungle selected by them. Since there are no cemeteries, and no special burying grounds for the sib, the choice of the site is left to these men, who perform this work as a pious service and have no other function in connection with the burial. -- There are no professional gravediggers. [767]

764 The grave is always laid out in an east-west direction, and in stony or level ground it is dug out about one meter deep, otherwise another half a meter.

The burial takes place between about two and three [614] o'clock. The closest male members of the sib who are able-bodied carry the coffin to the burial place, accompanied by all the sib members and guests. Here it is let down into the pit in such a way that the corpse lies horizontally in the grave, with the head toward the east and the feet toward the west. The Meau of today no longer know why this direction is observed; they are following a /117/ custom handed down from

/117 cont./

764 former times. No gifts are added to the coffin. The grave is now closed again with stones and earth; sometimes a mound is formed, sometimes it remains flat. It also happens that a simple fence is erected around the grave site or the grave mound. Often the grave is also covered with leaves which are weighted down with sticks and stones. This is supposed to be [825] the most effective way to prevent wild animals from digging up the corpse. If the location of the grave is to be kept secret, the earth which remains after the grave is closed is scattered, and in a few hours nothing remains to suggest a burial site. In no case, not even in connection with the death of prominent [766] Meau, are forked posts or megaliths erected.

764 After the burial a sacrifice is offered. In the case of a 782 poor man, pigs or merely chickens are slaughtered without [556] much ceremony or ado. If he were a rich man, however, the [533] sacrifice consists of an ox or a buffalo. Even during the [775] slaughtering, the playing of the mouth organs, the gongs, and, if such are available, the drums begins and continues uninterruptedly until the meat of the sacrificial animal is completely cut up and the soul of the deceased has been invited to enjoy itself. This is followed by dancing to the mouth organs, which ends the funeral. During the following three days additional sacrifices are offered to the soul of the deceased by [775] putting food on the grave, since it is assumed that during this period it stays in the vicinity of the grave (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section "Ideas about Death and the Soul").

[766] The manner of burial is basically the same for men, [554] women, and children, with no differences other than that the sacrifices characterize the social rank of the deceased. Moreover, depending on the rank of the deceased, more or fewer 764 mourners appear. Abadie (1) confirms this and describes the 766 177

1. Page 168.

burial of a very distinguished Meau chief, which, he says, was just as simple as that of a humble man, except for the coffin for which, following the Chinese custom, a non-rotting, petrified wood was used.

/118 cont./
765 and likewise a widower after the death of his wife, are for-
582 bidden to marry or to have sexual intercourse for one year.
834 Widows, however, are subject to these restrictions for one
week. The festival of the dead is celebrated one year after the
769 funeral at the latest. The date is not fixed; a sufficient supply
of food is collected for it first, since all the relatives and
friends of the deceased, even from the neighboring villages,
appear at this celebration. One to three pigs are slaughtered,
[556 depending on the wealth and the social position of the deceased
574 and on the number of guests, the feast is prepared, and alcohol
782] and rice are also served. No sacrifices, however, are offered
on this occasion, and there are no subsequent ceremonies.
764 Lajonquière (4) gives an impressive, somewhat different

4. II, p. 318.

description of a Meau burial: "The burial customs are not always the same among the various tribes, but in our opinion the following are the most invariable ones: When a Meau has died, the sorcerer, provided that there is one in the area, is informed. With or /119/ without his help, the deceased is clothed in his best garments and tied in an erect position to one of the partitions of the house; then the funeral rites begin, in which the friends and neighbors participate. They last three days, during which there is a succession of feasts and dances. They eat in honor of the dead and with many kind words invite him to participate. His children even try to squeeze pieces of meat between the stiff lips.

"One or two buffalo have been slaughtered for the guests;
764 a dog is killed for the deceased, prepared, and, with a paper
775 string in its mouth, which is tied to the wrist of the corpse, is put beside it. (A Meau whom we questioned about the meaning of this custom told us that the dog was assigned the task of leading his master on the paths of the other world.)"

/119 cont./

764 This peculiar custom is also mentioned by Maspero (1),
[775]

1. Page 244.

who asserts that, instead of a dog, an ox is sometimes used.

Lajonquière's description continues: "On the third day, corpse and coffin are carried to the grave separately; more-
[789] over, a coffin is not always used. In order to drive away evil spirits, small cannons are fired, or, if they are not available, guns, around the funeral procession. The latter consists of the sorcerer, the children of the deceased, and several friends. In
[767] some regions the gravediggers march in step in a special way, which represents a kind of dance. As soon as the grave has been closed, a mound is heaped over it, which in Pakha, for example, is covered with flat stones. The bier on which the deceased was carried is smashed to pieces on it, a little food is left in the vicinity, and everybody returns home and ends the day eating and drinking...

765 "For one or two days, sometimes even longer, a member
775 of the family returns to the grave in order to bring food to the deceased; then he is forgotten."

764 This description is borrowed almost verbatim by Abadie (2),
[114]
[562]

2. Page 168.

who, however, adds that women do not take part in burials.
765 Lajonquière (3) stresses that actually there is no mourning

3. II, p. 319.

[302] among the Meau. During the three days of the funeral rites, the children of the deceased wear their hair loose and hanging down over their shoulders, but nothing is changed in their dress.

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/120/

M 764 [114] [789] Savina (1) reports briefly and likewise somewhat differ-

1. II, p. 229.

ently on the burial customs of the Meau: "As soon as someone has died, the drum is beaten and guns fired in order to drive away the evil spirits. People come to the house, bemoan the dead, and begin to drink liquor and to eat meat. On the third day the deceased is buried under the supervision of a shaman. M [787] [775] [825] The latter tosses a chicken into the air and sees from its fluttering which way the soul will go. The grave is made, about a meter deep, where it falls. The coffin is a hollowed-out tree trunk. A small mound is made on the grave with a few stones."

A 764 628 [203] [765] The burial customs of the Akha are similar at some points to those of the Meau. As among the latter, among the Akha, too, the guests from the surrounding villages are invited to the funeral by messengers. Until their arrival all work ceases in themourning village; no one leaves the village, and moreover, as a sign of mourning, even the inhabitants of those villages from which a number of persons have set out for the funeral as mourners retire into their houses.

A 764 Among the Akha the deceased is washed and, attired in his best clothing and silver ornaments, is laid out on a sleeping mat, over which is put a new white cotton cloth. The corpse is put on its back, and, while it is still warm, the toes and hands are tied so that when rigor mortis sets in the limbs will remain in the desired position. It is seen to that the arms of the corpse are stretched out and that the palms of the hands remain turned toward each other. Members of the family, friends, and, in the case of distinguished men, many village inhabitants, squat beside the corpse and around the house of the dead and maintain the deathwatch day and night and utter the lament for the dead. The members of the family go from one to the other of those present, in order to serve everyone.

/156 cont./

know. They believe in a fantastic mythical animal that lives in the water, the dragon 'Long-Wang,' and, finally, they worship the hearth spirit, 'Tsao-Chen.'" Abadie (3) reports the

3. Page 168.

same almost verbatim, but adds that the Meau actually have no religion at all and manifest an independence toward the deities just as they do toward human beings.

Both authors come to the conclusion that "the Meau do not live in constant fear of invisible evil spirits that are filled with hatred against the human beings. They wander unconcerned through their mountains entirely without prejudice." I, too, was struck by this character trait, especially as a great contrast to the attitude of the Lahu. In other respects, however, the opinion of these authors differs radically from that of the Catholic missionary, Savina (4), who wants to see the god of

4. II, p. 253.

heaven of the Meau /157/ elevated to a high god and, correspondingly, the other spirits reduced to minor spirits without influence, in such a way that then the conceptions of the Meau seem to harmonize very well with those of Catholicism: "The Meau never confuse spirits with God, do not ascribe any divine powers to them, and do not pay homage to them as they do to God."

Maspero takes the opposite view: "The religion of the Meau has been strongly influenced by Chinese Taoism. The native sorcerers are almost the pupils of the Taoist ones. Every family reveres the hearth god, as well as Kouan-yin as the protector of the house. At the beginning of the year sacrifices are offered to heaven and earth, and in the course of the year almost all the great Chinese festivals are celebrated. Moreover, the Meau are familiar with the transmigration of souls. The evil ones are banished into hell, where Ni-wan, the Chinese Ye-wang, presides. There is also a realm of the dead which is similar to the realm of the living."

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/158 cont./

A M 771 The missionary Telford (1) calls the Akha "perhaps the

1. Page 98.

most superstitious people in the state of Kengtung." According to our experience, the Akha, like all lower agriculturalists, have strong religious ties, but not nearly to the extent that the Meau have, in spite of the fact that the religion of the Akha, like that of the Meau, is definitely ancestor and spirit worship.

a) Ideas about Death and the Soul

M 761 776 The Meau regard sickness as well as the activity of evil spirits as causes of death. In their view, it may happen that in clearing land for a new rice field a tree in which a spirit dwells may be felled. Now the latter is angry at the human being who robbed him of his dwelling and kills him. Even if one should visit a spot in the forest which happens to shelter a spirit the latter regards this as a disturbance and seeks revenge on the intruder. It is therefore not surprising that a female shaman whose three sons had been the victims of an epidemic became convinced that she had built her house on a spot inhabited by an evil spirit who had taken revenge for it.

M 774 The Meau believe in an immortal soul, plĭ, which can have many shapes and leaves a sleeping human being in order to /159/ wander about invisibly. This causes dreams, for the experiences of the wandering soul become known to the sleeper in the dream. It generally returns to the body when the person awakens, but it may also happen that evil spirits hold the soul in captivity and prevent it from returning to the body. Then illness occurs, and if incantations are of no avail, death follows.

[753 776 761 755]

M 774 775 614 Every person has a soul. If a person dies, his soul is reborn in the next child of the family or the sib. Souls have no sex, for it does not matter what sex the next child of the sib is; even distinguished men may thus be reborn in the body of a girl. Accordingly, there is no judgement of good and evil human beings in the other world; the soul has nothing to expect other than that it will be reborn as soon as a new child of the

/159 cont./

774 sib comes into the world. It makes no difference whether the
775 person to whom the soul belonged was good or evil in his
614 previous lifetime.

In contrast to this, Lajonquière (1) reports: "Human be-

1. II, p. 313.

ings have three souls, 'pli,' which arise again after twelve months when they enter the body of a pregnant woman. The souls of evil men are reborn in a frail child which is doomed to a miserable life and speedy death. Those of young unmarried girls haunt the paternal home, as do the souls of small children, which are reborn in the same family. All these conceptions, which are generally vague and sometimes contradictory, appear to us more like fortuitously discovered
[114] stories than native doctrine." Although Abadie (2) has borrowed

2. Page 169.

these statements, too, almost literally, they have not gained in probability, at least for the Thailand area. There is much more of an impression that both authors -- for whatever reasons -- did not probe deeply into the complex religious conceptions of the Meau. I was able to determine the following:

753 According to the view of the Meau, a person becomes
774 sick when the soul does not return, but then, too, the soul leaves the body when a person becomes sick. One notices this by the fact that the person loses the zest for living and seems
775 to be absent-minded. When a person dies, /160/ the soul is always absent. It then returns to the dead body and takes up residence in it until it is buried. Then it leaves the dead body, but remains for three days in the vicinity of the grave. During this period it is given food which is placed on the grave by the survivors. Then it returns to the house and takes up permanent residence there until it is reborn. If the direct family dies out, the soul takes up residence in the house of the nearest blood relatives. When I asked what would happen if the

/160 cont./

775 sib died out, the informants repeatedly gave me the answer: "That does not happen." When I pointed to other peoples, it was said: "Well, we do not know what souls would do in such a case." They could not tell me any more about what happened to the souls of the insane or cretins, and similarly there was [828] no explanation for fainting.

769 When the Meau change their residence site, the souls of
114 the dead leave the old house along with the migrants, after they
[775] have been informed of the change of location through a special ceremony. They then migrate with them and take up residence in the new dwelling of the family. Contrary to my findings, Lajonquière (1) reports that the souls stay in the old houses in

II, p. 319.

case of a change of residence: "A Meau who was asked by a missionary whether he worships his ancestors answered: 'Yes, they are there, and we do not take them with us!'" It seems to me that this is undoubtedly an error, for otherwise the confirmed ancestor worship and the cult associated with it among the Meau could not be explained. I do not think that there is a misconception on my part because my data are largely confirmed by various observations of other authors, and moreover a cult of the kind practiced by the Meau without the presence of ancestors could only be regarded as absurd.

753 If a soul does not find its way back to the body, it is
774 commonly assumed, as was said, that evil spirits prevent it from doing so, but it may also happen that it simply loses its way. That is, it is inquisitive and goes into the region of the clouds or into distant primeval forests among strange peoples and in doing so travels dangerous and devious paths. The owner of such a wandering soul /161/ grows weak and wastes [761] away; if one does not succeed in calling the soul back, the person dies.

775 The dead and their souls are not feared. The dead
761 body remains in the grave and decomposes; it can never return. If it should actually come back to life, this could only mean that there was a mistake and that the person had

/161 cont./

775 [761] not died. This information strongly suggests a knowledge of apparent death. While the corpse is rotting in the grave, the soul keeps the shape of the deceased. Nevertheless the souls are not feared, not even those of powerful chiefs or shamans, as long as they belong to the sib. Since they know no abode other than that of ordinary men and women, there is no realm of souls.

775 787 Only in dreams does a dead person appear to a living one. Such appearances are impossible in the waking state and are not limited to seasons or times of day. The appearance of a dead person means only that the soul is hungry and in need of sacrifices, which are then quickly offered.

614 775 776 825 In general, the souls of the dead of alien sibs are not feared either. There is one exception, however. During the three days after interment when every soul remains unprotected, so to speak, in the neighborhood of the grave, it may happen that it is dragged into the jungle by evil spirits and is transformed there into a man-eating tiger. If such a tiger is shot, evil spirits take the soul with them. In time it turns into an evil spirit which causes harm. Such evil spirits are dangerous for people who do not belong to the sib, and only for them. If the track of a tiger shows five toes instead of the customary four, it is a magic soul-tiger.

775 825 [648] Tales of this sort have also reached the valley-dwelling neighbors of the Meau, who now have considerable fear of the Meau. Lajonquière (1), for instance, writes: "that the Thai say

1. II, p. 312.

of the Meau that they do not have to be afraid of tigers because they belong to the same family and can transform themselves into tigers in the evening." The Meau north of Nan have the [763] [177] notion that a tiger /162/ jumps against a house in which a person is in his death struggle. The tiger takes the soul, which is transformed into a tiger. This idea is undoubtedly foreign, probably of Laotian origin.

Akha A04
Miao AE5

/162 cont./

M 774 825 Trees, rocks, and the like do not have a soul, but some animals do, such as some tigers, but also dogs, which will be discussed in the section, "Deities and Spirits," in this chapter.

M 775 614 The souls of the ancestors exert an influence upon the lives of their descendants. They protect them against evil spirits, help wherever they can, as in case of sicknesses, which are usually caused by evil spirits, and promote the growth of field products and the well-being of domestic animals. Their most important function, however, is their concern for the perpetuation of the sib. They do this by inducing the spirit which is next in the succession of deaths to let itself be reborn as a child. There is a striking contradiction in the fact that, on the one hand, the ancestors are regarded as helpful spirits, while, on the other hand, they are reborn. Under normal circumstances the members of a sib multiply, so that more children are born than individuals of the sib die. If the ancestors are reborn in the children, the lack of further ancestors would bring about a cessation of births, or some of the children born would have to come into the world without souls. Moreover, if all the ancestors were reborn as babies, no one would remain to carry out the important functions of ancestors. I explained my doubts to various informants. Each one answered without further deliberation that there were many more ancestors from former times than could ever be reborn, for in ancient times the Meau were much more numerous than they are today. I had no reply to this logic.

A 761 Like the Meau, the Akha regard sickness as a cause of death, but they also view old age and not least the effects of black magic as causes of death. The Akha, too, believe in a

A 774 [828] [787] [756] soul, ne, which likewise /163/ leaves the body during sleep in order to wander about. Therefore, dreams are the experiences of the soul, to which, consequently, special importance is attached. One therefore does not fail to visit the shaman to have the dream experience interpreted if such an occasion arises. In any case upon awakening one must see to it that the soul is

/167 cont./

776 [829] [773] know the deities of the neighboring tribes, but that they neither fear or revere them. The memory of the heroes of ancient times has also been lost. Thus they do not know who brought them their cultural goods, for instance, fire (for the spirit ta ho lu pin merely has to watch over the fire!), nor to whom they owe their social institutions.

In general the Meau do not know of any hierarchy of the spirits. It is of no consequence, for instance, that the teacher-spirit of the smithy has two assistant spirits whereas the spirit helping the doctor acts without any. All these spirits are more or less neutral in relation to one another and equal in rank, even when they appear as spirit pairs.

231 796 There are also /168/ spirits that are intentionally created by human beings. Among animals, dogs are the best friends of the Meau, and even the small child chooses the dog as his playmate, believing that it directly understands him. The adult Meau also appreciates the watchfulness of the dog, which guards the house against evil persons. Hence it is easy to understand how the conception arose that a dead dog would become a guardian spirit, who in the realm of the spirits, who live so much like human beings, would play a role similar to that of the adult, live dog in the realm of human beings. This guardian-spirit dog protects the houses of the Meau against evil spirits. In order to create such a spirit a dog is killed in a prescribed manner. Since it is believed that the dog's age does not matter and that a newborn dog fulfills the same purpose as a full-grown animal, a newborn dog is, of course, usually selected for the guardian spirit. It will also carry out its task as a full-grown watchdog in the other world. The dog selected, usually a young dog, is killed either by hanging it from a noose and letting it struggle to death or by cutting its throat (Ill. 101).[1] [782] Such a killing therefore does not represent a sacrifice, but the creation of a guardian spirit.

[1] [See cat. 116, p 666 - ANALYST]

/168 cont./

231 776 [731] [789] [243] If a village is plagued by many sicknesses, the Meau erect a symbolic gate out of three crossbeams about 40 or 50 meters from the village on the path leading to their settlement. Here the dog is hanged, and it is assumed that henceforth, as a guardian spirit, it will seek to prevent evil spirits from treading the paths that lead into the village. The same procedure is followed before laying out a new rice field.

[764] [775] In addition the Meau practice in different ways the custom of killing a dog when a human being dies; as a spirit it is supposed to guide the soul of the deceased into the other world.

776 My informant explained to me that over this whole host of spirits there stands only one spirit to whom they all, even the ancestors, are subject, "as to a king." He is invisible like all the other spirits, but in contrast to the latter he does not have human form, and lives simultaneously in heaven and in the earth, he is omnipresent. This chief spirit or, if one prefers, "high god" of the Meau, is bisexual, that is, male and female at the same time. He is the "Father and Mother spirit" of the Meau, who call him nă thu pen dọ nă thu /169/ pẹ̆ dŏ. Savina (1)

[114] [775]

1. II, p. 243.

gives his name as Ndo Chu or Chu Lau and maintains that this chief spirit, according to Meau belief, created the world. I was unable to find any confirmation for this notion, however.

It is not his affair to determine birth and death, but he is turned to when especially important reasons come up, for instance, when evil spirits are to be fought, and therefore especially in the case of epidemics and similar events. The animals of the forest are likewise under the jurisdiction of the high Father-Mother spirit. Therefore, the hunters must turn to him with their request for rich booty.

[931] [825] [224]

[993] The Meau told me that human beings do not know who created the world (concerning the legends about this, see the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales"). They also do not know who makes lightning and thunder and do not have any clear conception as to the origin of these natural phenomena. They presume, however, that they are linked with the actions of the

[821] [626]

/177 cont./

428 752 The young shaman chosen by his father does not have to go through any kind of preparatory period or apprenticeship. This is actually unnecessary since his abilities depend on the will of the spirits, and the duties of a shaman have been familiar to him since childhood through his observation of his father's activities.

752 787 [775] It is the task of the shaman to learn the wishes of the ancestors and spirits and to make them known to human beings. The shaman, however, can call on not only the ancestors, but also the souls of dead strangers. Through them he receives information with which he may, for instance, clear up a crime. On the other hand, he cannot induce them to change their dwellings /178/ or influence them in any other way. It is also impossible for the shaman to bewitch human beings or to do other evil deeds by means of his supernatural powers, just as he cannot influence the weather. On the other hand, in addition to other duties which will be discussed below, the shaman has the task of driving away evil spirits that make the houses and fields of human beings unsafe or those by whom human beings are possessed.

Fig. 40
Fabric cross of the Meau. 1/15 nat. size. Worn sewed on the back of the jacket of the shamans.

752 [754] [789]

752 755 789 [822] Exorcism is practiced with very simple means. Since the spirits always have a special liking or dislike for certain colors, the shaman ascertains, after an appropriate ceremony, which color in particular the spirit that possesses a human being rejects. Accordingly he has a cross of black, white, or red cloth sewed on the back of the clothes of the one possessed, since these are the colors that come under consideration. In the long run the spirit is unable to bear the odious color and seeks another abode, whereupon the one possessed is cured.

There is still another method of spirit-exorcism. The one possessed must sit down on the ground, and the shaman conjures [787] his teacher-spirit, the ancestors, and the three pairs of assistant spirits. Then he commands the evil spirit to leave the body of [778] the sick person, over whose head he clashes together the magic

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231 776 789 [775] Ill. 101. The dog is a beloved friend of the Meau. They believe that the soul of a dead dog plays a role in the other world, in the realm of the spirits, similar to the one it plays in the life of men. The throat of a newborn dog is cut so that it, as a guardian, will protect the house against sickness and evil spirits.

756 789 Ill. 102. Exorcising evil spirits by means of the shaman (right) and his assistant. The former is holding a burning torch, into which he throws gunpowder held in readiness by the assistant. The leaping flame, the smoke, and the stench are supposed to drive away the evil spirits.

231 782 Ill. 103. Before being slaughtered, the pig is purchased from the spirits by burning spirit-money representing the value of the animal under the snout of the animal.

Ills. 104-108. Houses and settlement.

343 243 482 Ill. 104. Work-hut in a rice field. In the left foreground, the typical Meau carrier.

/XI

342 [415] Ill. 105. Simple dwelling of the Meau, with walls and doors made of halved bamboo tubes. Beside the entrance stand long bamboo tubes with the partitioning walls pushed out, which serve as water containers.

353 [264] [354] Ill. 106. Flash-light photograph in the interior of a house of the White Meau. The family having a meal. In the background on the right, the mud hearth with the Chinese iron kettle. Household utensils hang down along the walls and from the ceiling of the storage loft.

622 [264] [352] Ill. 107. A chief of the Black Meau in his dwelling at mealtime. The furniture is peculiar, differing basically from that of the Chinese and showing a striking resemblance to the furniture of the mountain peasants in the Alps. In the foreground on the right, the oldest son; to the left, two daughters of the chief. Various kitchen utensils are hanging on the house wall.